

Middle School Newsblatt

Innovative education of the whole child through German immersion.



January 22, 2021

As you prepare to check your child's grades for the first semester of the school year, I want to revisit what grades show us and how this particular year may have impacted them.

Grades are the communication from the teacher and the school to the student and the family. Grades tell us about progress. They tell us about standards completion. They tell us if students are ready to move on to the next level. Sometimes they tell us about levels of participation and engagement. And sometimes they even speak to us about how much a student cares for a subject.

In this difficult school year, we chose to keep the grading system intact as they are useful for telling us all of those things. Some students have really thrived in this model and are performing where they normally would. Others are falling behind where they would usually land. But we held on to them as one of the major frameworks of how we do school. Because of this unusual year, the middle school teachers have worked intentionally to provide thoughtful comments in hopes of showing the clearest picture of your child's semester in addition to the letter grade.

That said, we know that COVID is not making us all our best selves. It is probable that Zoom fatigue, the transitioning between models of learning and lack of social interaction have negatively impacted your child's ability to perform where he/she/they normally do. I hope that you will look at your child's grades with the framework of where your child usually ends up on the grading scale. Take that into consideration with your child's experience in school this year as you process through your kid's grades. Know that when we look back on this semester's grades, they will show us this is the semester in which we endured. This was the semester

we were truly challenged. This was the semester we all learned about grit. And this was the semester that will hopefully make us feel more grateful toward all of the semesters in the future.

As always, reach out with any questions you may have.

Yours in the work,

~Elizabeth Zehnpfennig, Middle School Dean

Middle School Schedule and Transitioning Update

	K-2	3-5	6-8
Jan. 25-29	Distance Learning M-T NO Instruction Th-F (Teacher Work Days) Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning M-T NO Instruction Th-F (Teacher Work Days) Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning Async Instruction: W
Feb. 1-5	In person: M, T, Th, F Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning Async Instruction: W
Feb. 8-12	In person: M, T, Th, F Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning Async Instruction: W
Feb. 15-19	Holiday/No School: M, T In person: Th, F Async Instruction: W	Holiday/No School: M, T In person Th-F Async Instruction: W	Holiday/No School: M, T NO Instruction Th-F (Teacher Work Days) Async Instruction: W
Feb. 22-26	In person: M, T, Th, F Async Instruction: W	In person: M, T, Th, F Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning Async Instruction: W
March 1-5	In person: M, T, Th, F Async Instruction: W	In person: M, T, Th, F Async Instruction: W	In person or Hybrid: M, T, Th, Fr (COVID #s pending) Async Instruction: W
March 8-12	In person: M, T Async Instruction: W No School: Th, F	In person: M, T Async Instruction: W No School: Th, F	In person or Hybrid: M, T (COVID #s pending) Async Instruction: W No School: Th, F

I understand that looking at this can be frustrating. I made a [video](#) to help you through it.

Looking Ahead

New News

Class of 2021 Make-Up Capstone Trip Meeting

Although we are heartbroken about our inability to travel to Germany, visit exchange partners and have our 8th grade Capstone trip, we are excited to announce that we are currently working on a travel opportunity for the class of 2021 and potentially 2020 in the summer of 2022. We invite 8th graders and their families to a meeting to hear the beginnings of this plan. Please join us via Zoom on February 18th at 7:30pm to learn more. Link coming as we get closer to this date.

First 7th Grade 2022 Capstone Trip Meeting

Save the Date! The first meeting for the 7th graders' Capstone trip to Germany in 2022 will be held on **March 4th at 7:00pm** via Zoom. Link coming soon to your Email inbox. Note the date change from last week.

Black History Month Opportunity to Celebrate

To celebrate Black History Month the TCGIS Library is hosting an online Read-In for 4th-8th grade students on **Wednesday, February 24 from 1:45-2:30pm**. The goal of our Read-In is to celebrate the works of African-American and African-German authors while spotlighting the importance of reading from racially-diverse authors.

How it works:

On February 24 we will be having an online ZOOM event in which students in 4th-8th grade are invited to read *and/or* listen to works from African American or African-German authors. This includes essays, poetry, books, etc.

Note: This does not include books about racially-diverse characters by white authors.

****ALL students in grades 4th-8th grade are welcome to attend, not only those who would like to read. In fact, it is just as essential to listen as it is to present!****

If you would like to read a text, please send Mary Zimmerman at mzimmerman@tcgis.org to sign-up. Please tell me your book, author, and the page numbers you'd like to read (in case someone else would like to share the same book). **I understand it may be difficult to find books in German and therefore English or German is also okay.** While you're not required to say anything after your reading, you are welcome to share why you chose to share this particular passage or book, something about the author, or anything else you feel

relevant. Please keep in mind that each sign-up slot is THREE-FOUR minutes in order to include as many readers as possible within our time frame.

Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 820 3249 0839

Passcode: 237521

Special Central High School Open House:

Saint Paul Central High School will be hosting a special pre-Open House meeting just for our incoming TCGIS families from 4:30-5:00 on February 4th. This will not take the place of the Open House but will be specific to the German Immersion program so parents should be encouraged to attend the Open House following the meeting as well.(See next message below)

Reminders:

SPPS Central High School Virtual Open House

Families have asked for a Central panel of students for our 7th and 8th graders who are deciding on a school. I am working on that and will let you know a date in the future. For now, SPPS will have Virtual Open House for Central High, the home of our 9-12 German Immersion track on:

February 4th, from 5-7pm.

There will be an additional special meeting for TCGIS parents on one end of this time slot that is yet to be determined. During the main sessions, parents and students can meet with school admin and teachers. During our special session, parents can ask specific questions. As a reminder, TCGIS 8th graders get preferential enrollment. I am told that enrollments are due around March 5th. You can monitor the [Central High School](#) website for more information and Zoom Links. I checked yesterday and it is not there yet. I'll keep you all posted.

7th Grade Math Scores Presentation

In November, Dr. Jessie Kember and I presented to the Parent Council on the state of Math in the 7th grade. We dove into the data and explained where we thought this class has landed in their math achievement. The presentation helped to increase confidence among

the council members that Math is on the right track here at TCGIMS and additionally, helped the lay person have a stronger understanding of the data and screener results.

Dr. Kember and I would like to offer this presentation for all 7th Grade families on:

February 23rd at 7pm via Zoom. Here is the [link](#).

